

MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)

Patient Information

What is MRI?

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) uses a strong magnetic field and radiofrequency pulses to obtain detailed images of your body. It is very sensitive for early detection of disease.

Is MRI Safe?

MRI is a painless examination which has been in clinical use for over 10 years. It does not use x-rays or radiation. Due to the powerful magnetic fields used to obtain the images some metallic implants and medical devices are unsafe and there may be conditions to entering the MRI scanning room.

Electronic devices such as pacemakers, cochlear implants and nerve stimulators can malfunction in the magnetic field. Other metallic implants that are fixed within the body are safe within the magnetic field. Metallic implants can cause some distortion of images. Your safety is most important and is checked thoroughly.

Pregnancy

To date there is no evidence that short term exposure to magnetic fields or radiofrequency pulses is harmful to the foetus. However, if there is no urgency for the scan, we recommend delaying the examination until after pregnancy.

Prior to the Examination

1. Eat normally unless otherwise instructed. Take your usual/normal medications.
2. Do not wear hairspray or makeup as some products have metallic components.
3. Bring any previous relevant x-rays and scans.
4. Bring your Medicare card, Pension/Healthcare card, Veteran's Affairs card, referral from Doctor and insurance details if applicable.

5. Some systems and examinations allow the use of our special MRI safe headphones so music can be played during your scan. You may bring a CD or listen to the radio.
6. Metallic items cannot be taken into the scanning room, for example:
 - watch and jewellery
 - pins
 - glasses/hearing aids
 - credit cards etc
 - mobile phones/pagers
 - pens/keys
 - magnetic dentures/stomal bag/hairpieces

Secure storage is provided for any valuables you bring.

The Examination

1. You will be required to complete a safety questionnaire.
2. A member of staff will explain the examination and answer any questions you may have.
3. The magnet is a wide hollow tube, open at both ends. You will be required to lie still on a padded table which slides into the centre of the magnet.
4. The total examination time is approximately 15 to 60 minutes, but may be longer depending on the type and number of scan sequences. There are additional administrative processes that will need to be completed, so you should allow up to 2 hours for your appointment.
5. There is a loud knocking noise during the scanning. This is normal. Earplugs or music via headphones are provided for your comfort.
6. The staff can see you during the examination and can communicate with you via an intercom system.
7. Occasionally an intravenous injection of contrast or dye is required to obtain further information – this is usually determined at the time of the examination by the radiologist.

Questions

This brochure is provided to help you understand the MRI procedure.

If you have any questions prior to your examination, you can speak with a member of our staff by phoning Patient Services on **132 336**.

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The Results

The MRI examination produces 50 to several hundred images which need to be processed and then interpreted by a radiologist. Sometimes a second opinion will be required at no additional cost. This can delay the report reaching your doctor. If there is any condition requiring urgent attention, then your doctor will be notified within a short time after the scan.

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